

Thursday, September 25, 2003

Public access to proposed borough road questioned

By KDN Staff

One meeting after the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly voted to spend \$500,000 on constructing the proposed Lewis Reef Road, Borough Mayor Mike Salazar said it would not be open to the public.

"I don't think it was ever the intent to have it be a public road," Salazar said at Monday's regular meeting. But other borough officials say the road eventually would be open for public use.

The Lewis Reef Road would be about 2 miles long and connect Pacific Log and Lumber, which is located on borough property on the east side of Gravina Island, to Ketchikan International Airport.

The Assembly voted unanimously on Sept. 2 to spend \$500,000 from the borough's Land Trust Fund to begin building the road.

Assembly Member Dick Coose said the road eventually could be used by the public, but initially, it could not be easily accessed except through the mill site.

That's because the road would end at the north end of the airport and would not connect to the airport ferry, said Coose. The borough's Lewis Reef Road eventually would connect to a road the state is proposing to build in conjunction with a bridge from Revillagigedo to Gravina Island, he said.

"Until we get the road from the airport terminal around the south end of the airport, it's kind of a piece of road that's isolated," Coose said. "In the short run, public access would be difficult."

In the meantime, Coose said Seley could add onto the Lewis Reef Road by punching a logging road west to future timber sale sites after the sales have been purchased.

If the borough road is used to haul timber, Coose said public use of the road could be limited.

At Monday's Assembly meeting, Planning Department head Stephen Reeve suggested that the borough seek to use a portion of the initial \$20 million the state for the Gravina Access Project.

All of the ferry and bridge alternatives listed in the Gravina Access Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement include the construction of about a four mile road from the airport terminal building to Lewis Reef, where Pacific Log and Lumber is located, said Reeve.

For more detail on this story, see Deanna Garrison's article in the Sept. 25, 2003, edition of the Ketchikan Daily News.